

SECRET

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

IT IS

SECRET

[REDACTED]

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE _____

[REDACTED]

HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT NOEL DE JESUS ((BETETA)) ALVAREZ, THE PERSON ACCUSED OF MURDERING GUATEMALAN ANTHROPOLOGIST MIRNA ((MACK)) CHANG, WAS ACTUALLY THE AUTHOR OF THE CRIME. THE CASE HAS BECOME A POLITICAL CAUSE CELEBRE, RESULTING IN INTENSE PRESSURE ON THE NATIONAL POLICE TO SOLVE IT. THIS PRESSURE, RATHER THAN ANY HARD EVIDENCE, IS BEHIND THE NAMING OF BETETA AS A SUSPECT. (FIELD COMMENT: THE ORDER OF THE ARREST OF BETETA WAS HEADLINED IN THE PRESS DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF JULY.)

2. BETETA WAS A MEMBER OF THE GUATEMALAN ARMY ON ACTIVE DUTY WITH THE SECURITY DEPARTMENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL STAFF (DSEMP) ON 12 SEPTEMBER 1990, WHEN MACK WAS MURDERED. BEFORE SERVING WITH THE DSEMP, HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL POLICE, WORKING IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION (DIC). AT THE TIME OF THE MURDER, BETETA WAS ON MEDICAL LEAVE FROM THE DSEMP BECAUSE OF A SERIOUS INJURY TO HIS RIGHT HAND. HE WAS TREATED FOR THE INJURY FROM JULY 1990 ONWARD UNTIL HIS DISCHARGE FROM THE ARMY ON 2 OCTOBER 1990. BECAUSE OF INFECTIONS AND OTHER COMPLICATIONS, HE WAS UNABLE TO RETURN TO FULL DUTY DURING THIS TIME. HE WAS DISCHARGED FROM THE ARMY AFTER HE HAD IGNORED SEVERAL DIRECT ORDERS TO PRESENT HIMSELF AT THE DSEMP HEADQUARTERS.

3. THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE POINTING TO BETETA AS THE KILLER OF MACK, AND THE NATIONAL POLICE HAVE NAMED HIM AS A SUBJECT APPARENTLY BECAUSE HE BEARS A SUPERFICIAL PHYSICAL RESEMBLANCE TO DESCRIPTIONS OF ONE OF THE ALLEGED KILLERS. AS BETETA IS WELL-KNOWN AS A MEMBER OF THE DSEMP WHO LEFT THE LATTER SHORTLY AFTER THE MURDER, THE NATIONAL POLICE APPARENTLY CONCLUDED HE WOULD BE AS LIKELY A SUSPECT AS ANY OTHER. THE FACT BETETA IS NO LONGER IN GUATEMALA, OR AT LEAST CANNOT BE LOCATED, INCREASED HIS ATTRACTIVENESS AS A SUSPECT. BY NAMING HIM, THE PRESSURE ON THE POLICE HAS TEMPORARILY EASED. (SOURCE COMMENT: THERE IS NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN THE NATIONAL POLICE AND DSEMP. THE ALLEGED "POLITICAL" NATURE OF THE KILLING OF MACK WOULD NATURALLY LEAD TO THE DSEMP BEING ACCUSED OF POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT IN THE CRIME; THE OTHER ORGANIZATION LIKELY TO BE ACCUSED WOULD BE THE GUATEMALAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, THE DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF (D-2). THE POLICE, UNABLE TO UNCOVER ANY REAL LEADS IN THE CASE, SIMPLY LOOKED AROUND FOR A LIKELY SUSPECT WITH TIES TO ONE OF THE TWO MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICES.)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6. (SOURCE COMMENT: BETETA WAS IN NO PHYSICAL CONDITION TO MURDER A PERSON USING A KNIFE AT THE TIME THE CRIME WAS COMMITTED. THE INFORMATION ABOUT HIS INJURIES IS NOT KNOWN TO THE POLICE YET, BUT IT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THEM WHEN AN OFFICIAL REQUEST IS MADE. [REDACTED] THE DOCTORS WHO TREATED BETETA WILL BE ABLE TO TESTIFY TO THESE FACTS. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT MACK WAS MURDERED FOR POLITICAL MOTIVES, AND SOME ORGANIZATION OF THE GUATEMALAN SECURITY FORCES WAS INVOLVED. THERE IS, HOWEVER, NO EVIDENCE OF THIS AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME. IT IS JUST AS POSSIBLE THAT MACK WAS MURDERED IN A CRIME OF PASSION, IN A COMMON STREET ROBBERY OR ASSAULT, OR BY HER COLLEAGUES ON THE POLITICAL LEFT. THE POLITICAL PRESSURE SURROUNDING THE CASE HAS GENERATED THE CHARGES AGAINST BETETA, NOW SUPPOSEDLY OUT OF THE COUNTRY, AND THE VARIOUS PLAYERS INVOLVED IN THE CASE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS THAN CONDUCTING A SERIOUS CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. THE FINAL WORD ON THE CASE AT THIS TIME IS THAT NOBODY KNOWS WHO KILLED MACK OR WHY.)

7. (EMBASSY COMMENT: THIS IS ONE OF THE "HOT" HUMAN RIGHTS CASES INHERITED BY SERRANO FROM THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. THE MIRNA MACK CHANG CASE IS AT THE TOP OF THE LIST FOR INFLUENTIAL FOREIGN HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS. THE GOG IS UNDER CONSIDERABLE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO SOLVE THIS CASE SOON. THE CASE IS DISCUSSED IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S 1990 COUNTRY HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON GUATEMALA.)